

WASHINGTON STATE RACIAL
DISPROPORTIONALITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SHB 1472

Racial Disproportionality and Disparity in Washington State Report to the Legislature

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CA Children's Administration

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Department of Social and Health Services

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A current list of Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee Members can be found at <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/about/disproportionbios.asp>.

Introduction

As required by the Washington Legislature in SHB 1472 (2007), this report is the fourth annual update on efforts by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to remediate racial disproportionality in the Washington state child welfare system.

This report describes and reflects the thoughtful work of a network of DSHS leaders, staff, tribes, stakeholders, state partners and DSHS Children's Administration philanthropic partners such as Casey Family Programs, Stuart Foundation and Annie E. Casey Foundation to reduce disparate outcomes for children of color in the child welfare system.

Racial disproportionality is defined as the overrepresentation of children of color in the child welfare system compared to their numbers in Washington state and in the general population. Across the country, children of color enter and remain in the child welfare system at rates greater than their proportions in the population. Racial disparity in the child welfare system refers to the treatment and services provided to children of color compared to White children. Children of color in the child welfare system do not have equitable access to culturally appropriate services and supports delivered by culturally competent and sensitive staff and service providers.

The results of a 2008 study conducted by the Washington State Institute on Public Policy (WSIPP) found that racial disproportionality exists for Native American, Black¹ and Hispanic children in the Washington state child welfare system. In response to these findings, the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee (WSRDAC) developed recommendations for remediation and the DSHS - Children's Administration began work to implement remediation activities.

In 2012, the department implemented plans to address not only specific remediation initiatives but also other initiatives to safely reduce racial disproportionality. DSHS administrations convened staff trainings and workshops to educate and help staff address more directly racial disproportionality and disparity at an organizational level.

Children's Administration leadership committed to safely reduce racial disproportionality and racial disparity in the Washington state child welfare system. When briefing the WSRDAC, the CA Assistant Secretary asked the Committee, in their advisory role to CA, to provide guidance to CA about the focus of racial disproportionality efforts in CY2013, particularly in light of CY2012 legislation that will transform some aspects of service delivery.

¹ We use the term Black in this report to be inclusive of all African populations around the world, which include Sub-equatorial African, African American, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latin American and Black Canadian.

At the June 2012 retreat, WSRDAC members reviewed work completed on the remediation recommendations including progress on the four supplemental remediation initiatives developed by the committee in CY2011. The new remediation initiatives from November 2011 are:

- Increase recruitment and licensing of caregivers of color
- Increase documentation of ethnic and racial background and tribal affiliation in FamLink
- Eliminate the use of long-term foster care for children of color 12 years or older
- Make Disproportionality awareness training mandatory for CA staff

In April 2012, the Children's Administration Disproportionality Program Manager convened workgroups to develop recommendations for the implementation of these initiatives. The workgroups included members of CA field and headquarters staff; Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee; Indian Policy Advisory Committee; Children, Youth and Family Services Advisory Committee; and other community stakeholders.

DSHS staff and the WSRDAC research sub-committee continue to refine data measures to track more accurately the changes in race population and disproportionality. CA continues to look deeper into the data, refining the data and measures.

Significant reduction in disproportionality has not yet occurred throughout the Washington state child welfare system. New initiatives will take several years to produce results and it will take time for system changes to be reflected in the data in the state. However, overall results are mixed for current efforts to reduce disproportionality in the child welfare system.

- The rate of disproportionality regarding allegations reported to the statewide child abuse and neglect has declined except for other multiracial children.
- Disproportionality has increased in initial placement except Native American children, and in placements lasting longer than two years for all groups of children except for black children.
- Disproportionality has decreased in initial out-of-home placements with relatives, and placement moves in the first 12 months and the last 12 months of placement for all groups of children except Hispanic children.

The relationship between removal and length of time in placement and placement type and placement stability will need to be studied further. It may be that improvements in relative placements and placement stability are driving the increases in removals and length of time in care for certain children of color in care. Children placed with relatives tend to have more stable placements; however, they also tend to remain in care longer before legal permanency is achieved.

WSRDAC continues to evaluate strategies and activities and monitor progress to safely reduce racial disproportionality. CA continues to work internally and with state, regional and national leaders to reduce racial disproportionality and disparity of services in the Washington state child welfare system.

Measuring Progress

Summary & Status:

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Children’s Administration (CA) monitors the progress and impact of implementation of the remediation plan. This fourth report to the legislature highlights changes in disproportionality rates from 2006 - 2011.

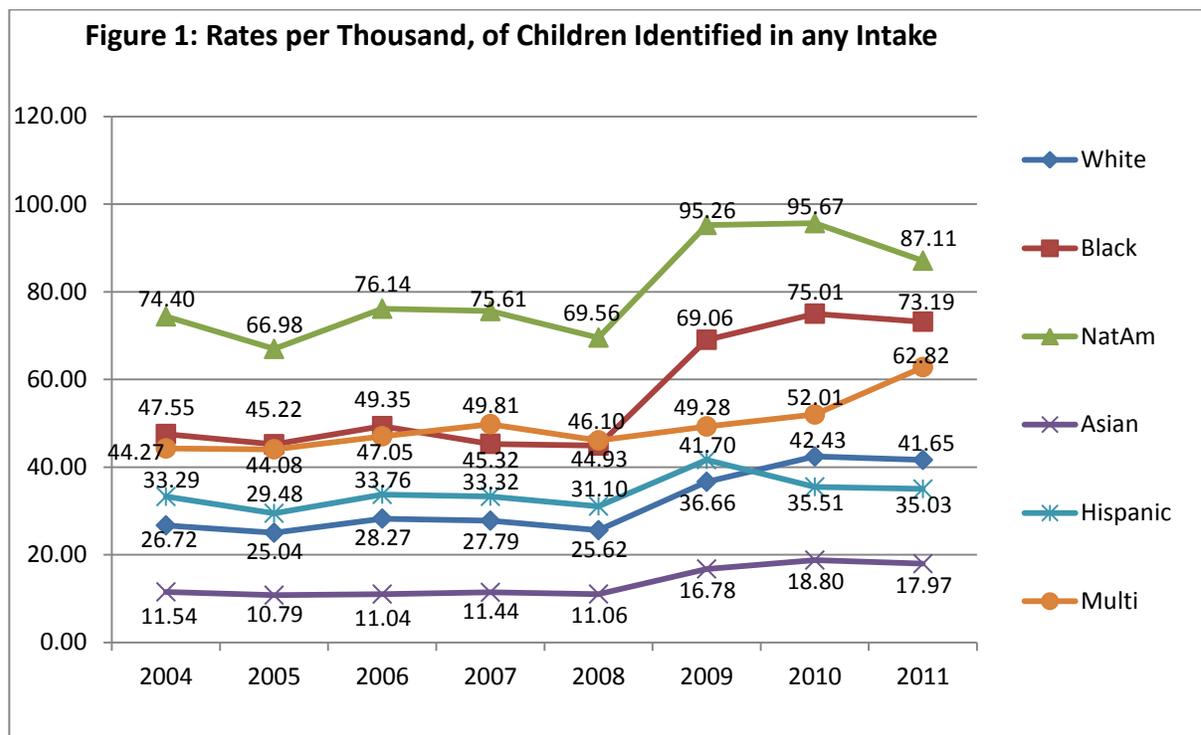
The table below lists each remediation activity and highlights the decision points that the WSRDAC intended the remediation activity to impact by improving the disproportionality rates. The shaded columns are those decision points emphasized in the remediation plan.

Expected Outcomes of Activities

ACTIVITIES <i>These activities are expected to decrease disproportionality in:</i>	Referrals	Accepted Referrals	Removed from home	Out of home > 2 years
Conduct Assessment of Children’s Administration	X	X	X	X
Implement a Racial Equity Impact Analysis Tool	X	X	X	X
Evaluate Structured Decision Making (SDM®)			X	
Maintain Compliance with Indian Child Welfare Act by Continuing ICW Case Reviews	X		X	X
Study impact of Enactment of a Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act			X	X
Evaluate Family Team Decision Making (FTDM)			X	X
Implement Kinship Care Policies			X	X
Implement Cultural Competency and Anti-Racism Training	X	X	X	X
Implement Mandated Reporter Training	X	X		
Explore Implementation of In-Home, Community Based Services			X	
Implement Council on Accreditation Standards Caseload Standards		X	X	X

In 2011, Children’s Administration modified the performance metrics used to measure changes in racial disproportionality. CA continues to measure trends in key decision points, and has added new measures that relate to the types and stability of out-of-home placements. CA’s data system began collecting information in 2009 on intakes screened in for investigation and those screened out. Including the screened out intakes affects the number and disproportionality of total intakes in 2009, 2010 and

2011. Figure 1 shows the effects of including these intakes in 2009 and 2010; intake rates for all racial groups except multiracial children have declined in 2011.



Changes to placements over 2 years

The definition of this indicator was changed to eliminate the delay in reporting. Rather than choosing a cohort of children in placement and following them into the future, we now look at children in care during the current year and look back to see how long they have been in care. We included children in care 2 years or more in the analysis. This allows us to track this indicator more closely to real time, rather than have a 2-3 year delay in reporting this outcome.

Changes to Disproportionality Index After Referral (DIAR)

The DIAR is the ratio of a racial/ethnic group compared to whites, which controls for disproportionality at referral. FamLink, CA's data system, changed the term "referral" to "intake." Therefore, the new statistic used in this report is the Disproportionality Index After Intake (DIAI). The DIAI measures any increase in disproportionality after a CPS intake. The meaning of the statistic is the same as in previous reports; values greater than one (1.0) indicate disproportionality; values less than one (1.0) indicate underrepresentation.

Changes to Racial Groups

In previous reports, statistics were calculated on a "Multiracial" group. This group included all children with more than one race identified, regardless of the races identified. In 2010, WSRDAC, CA staff, and stakeholders expressed concern that by

combining mixed race in one multiracial group we might mask potential disparities that existed based on physical appearance.

Beginning with the January 2012 report, for indicators based on CA's children in care, we separated the multiracial group into three categories: Multiracial Native American, Multiracial Black, and Multiracial Other. When we separate the multiracial category into subcategories for children in care, the results do suggest different rates of disproportionality for these three groups.

These additional multiracial categories are used for performance measures based on the child welfare population. However, we cannot calculate these new race categories for measures that use the state population estimates, so for those measures we used the original multiracial category.

Placement Measures

In 2011, Children's Administration added 4 new measures looking at disproportionality in placements, reunifications, and placement changes.

- DIAI of children not initially placed with relatives
- DIAI of children who moved twice or more in the first 12 months of placement
- DIAI of children reunified within 12 months of placement
- DIAI of children in care over two years who moved within the last 12 months

Results

Overall results are mixed for current efforts to reduce disproportionality in the child welfare system. The rate of disproportionality in intakes has declined except for other multiracial children. Disproportionality has increased in initial placement for all groups of children except Native American children. Disproportionality in placements lasting longer than two years has declined for Black children but has increased for all other groups of children. Disproportionality has decreased in initial placement with relatives, and placement moves in the first 12 months and the last 12 months of placement for all groups of children except Hispanic children.

Racial disproportionality in all intakes has decreased for all groups except multiracial children. As seen in Figure 2, between 2009 and 2011, disproportionality in overall intakes declined significantly for Native American (-.51%), Black (-.12) and Hispanic (-.30%) children, and stayed constant for Asian children.

A similar pattern appears when looking only at screened-in intakes. Disproportionality declines for Native American (-.62%), Black (-.19), and Hispanic (-.25%) children. (Figure 3)

Figure 2. DI of All Intakes (Screened Out or Screened-In)

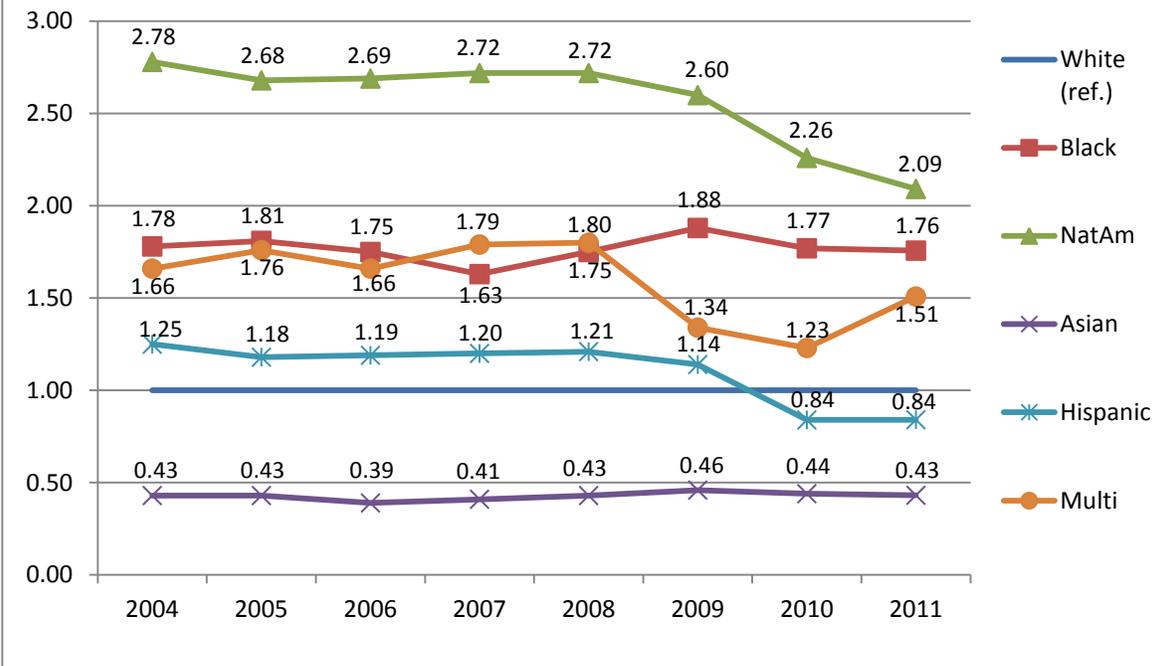
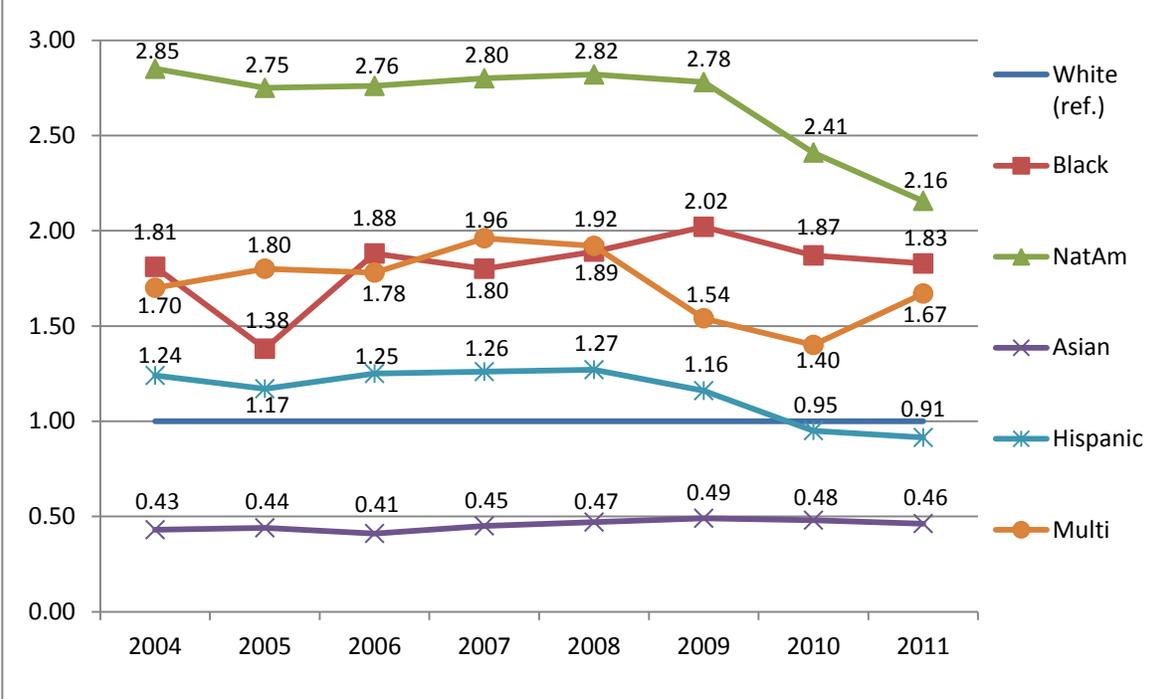
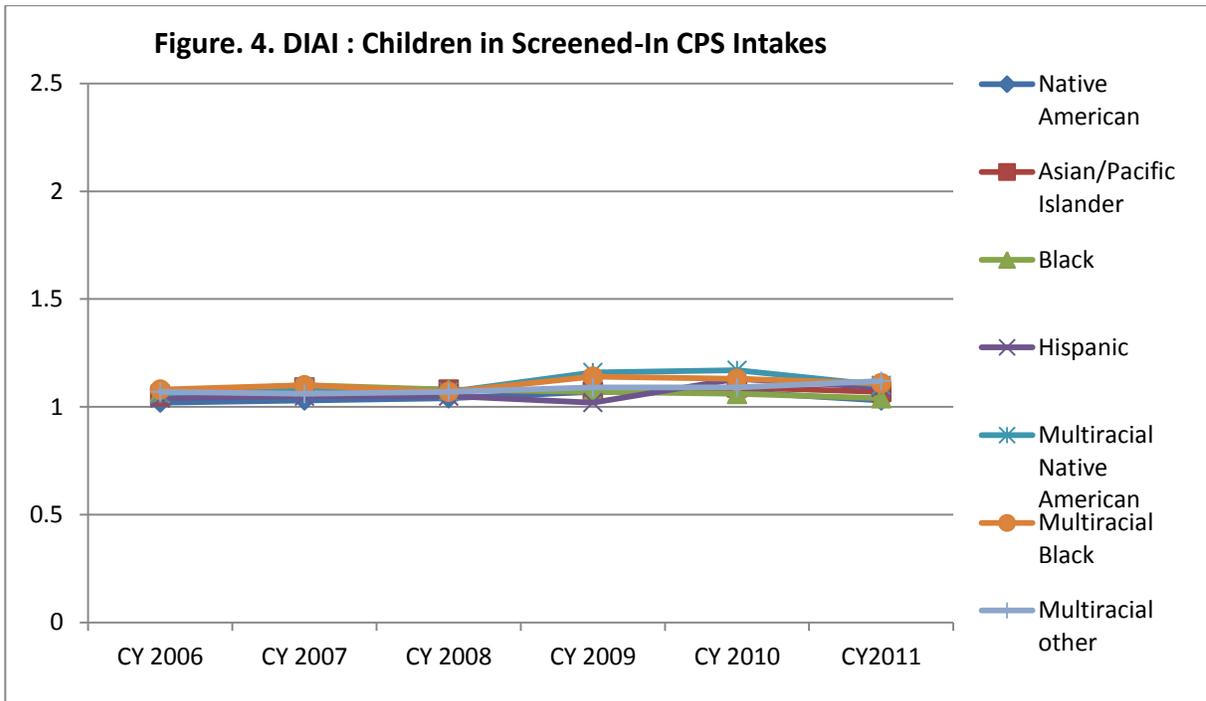


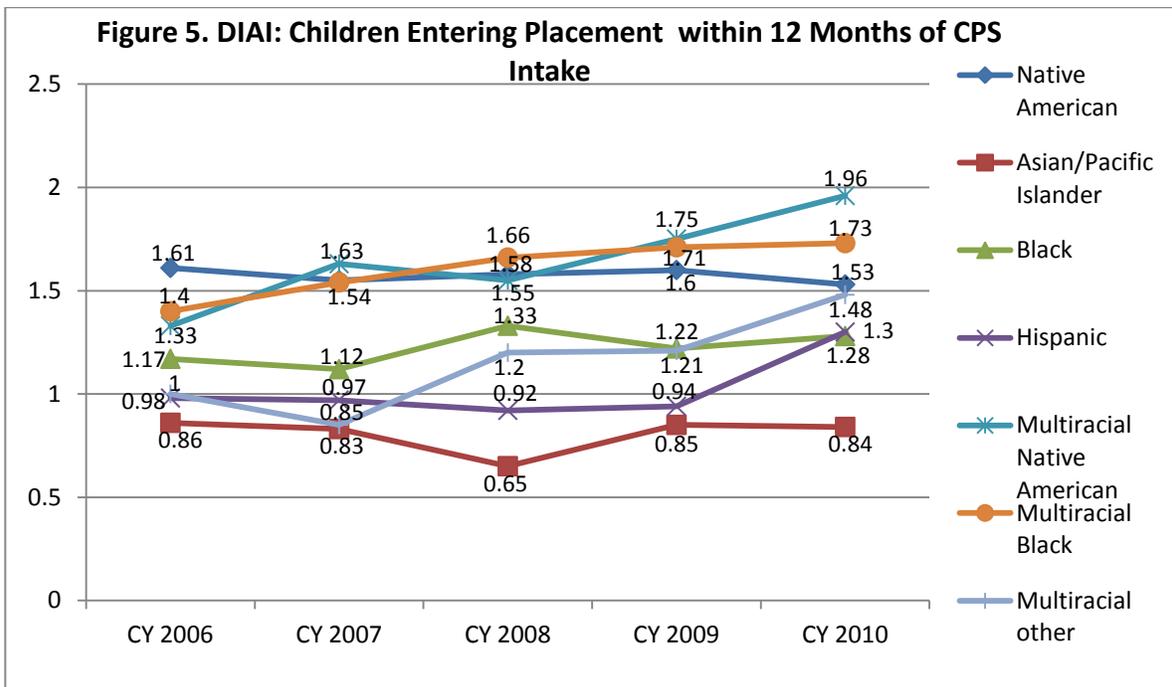
Figure 3. DI of Intakes (Screened-In)



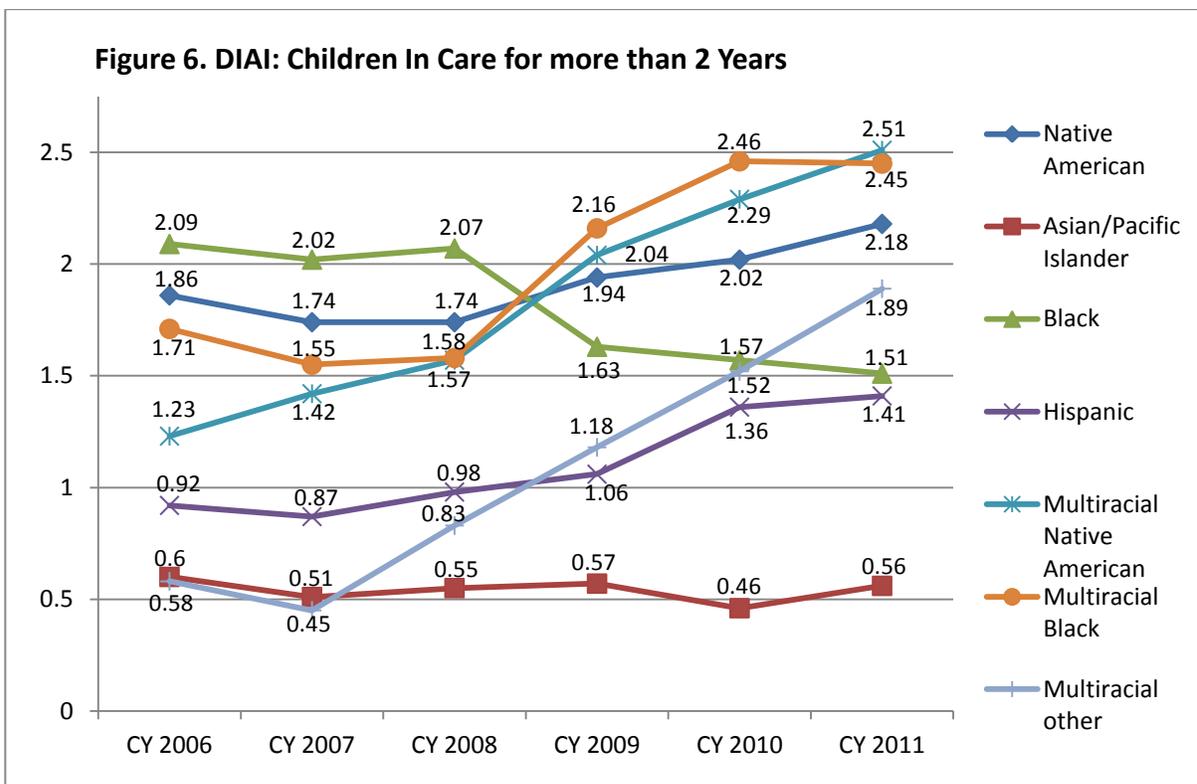
For screened-in intakes compared to all intakes, there is very little disproportionality for any racial group. This finding remains consistent across all reports. (Figure 4)



Disproportionality in placement remains and is increasing for Multiracial Native American, Multiracial Black, Hispanic and other multiracial children in care. Disproportionality also remains for Native American and Black children (Figure 5).

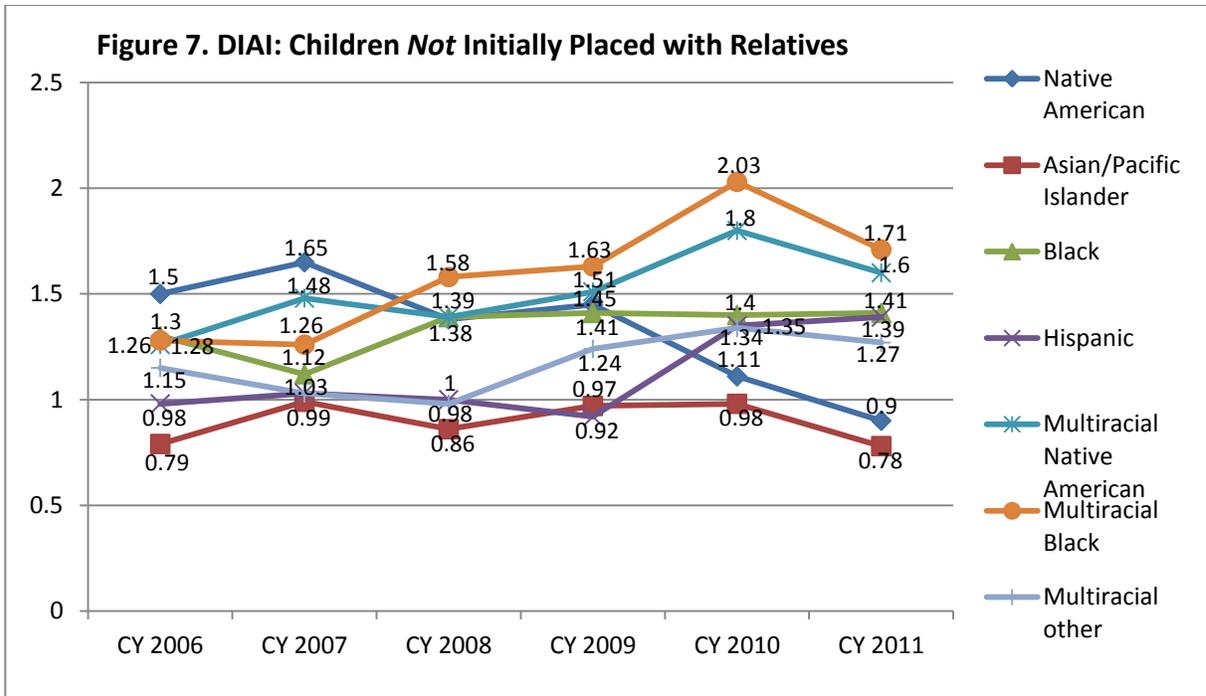


For children in care more than 2 years, disproportionality decreased in 2011 for Black (-.01) and Multiracial Black (-.01) children. Disproportionality increased for Multiracial Native American (+.22), Native American (+.16), other Multiracial (+.32), and Hispanic (+.05) children. Multiracial Black, Multiracial Native American and Native American children are more than twice as likely to be in care more than 2 years than White children. In 2011, Multiracial Other and Hispanic children were one and a half times more likely than White children to remain in care longer than 2 years. (Figure 6)

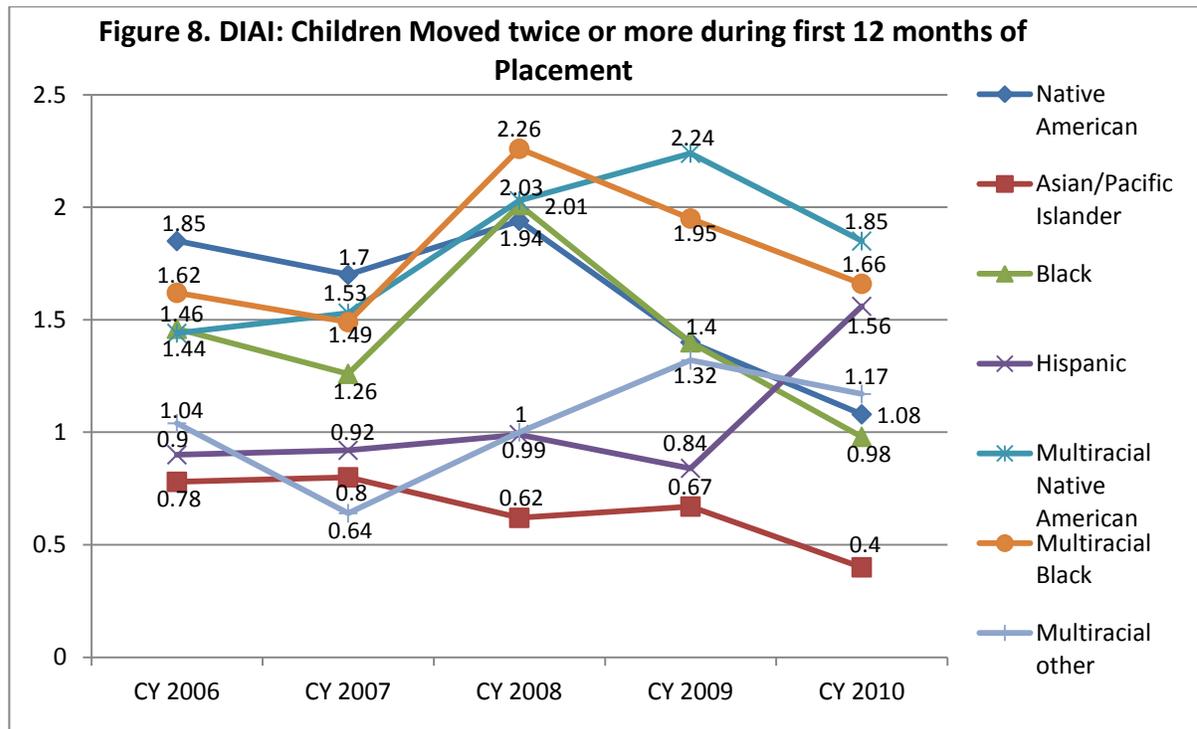


Placement Measures

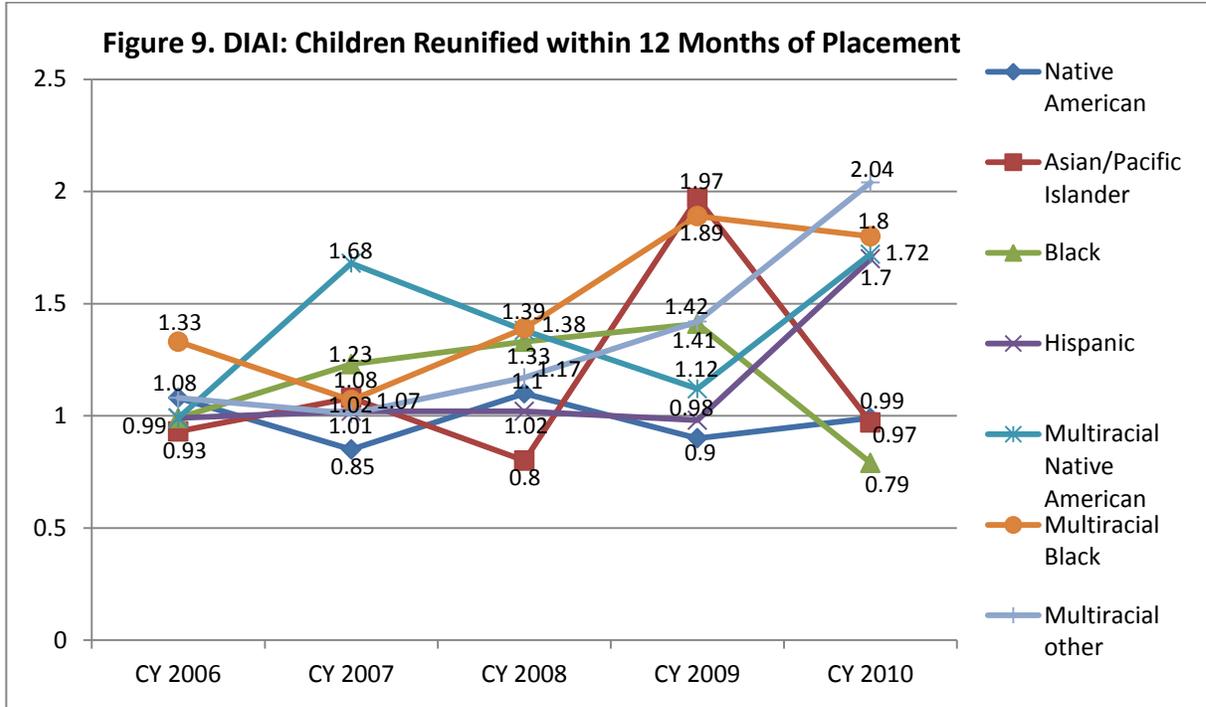
In 2011, Multiracial Black children were almost twice as likely and Multiracial Native American children 1.5 times as likely not to be placed with relatives. Disproportionality has decreased in the last year for all groups except Black and Hispanic children who have remained constant around 1.40. Disproportionality for Hispanic children increased slightly in 2011. Currently Native American and Asian children are more likely to be placed with relatives than all other groups. (Figure 7)



In 2010, disproportionality in placement stability decreased for all groups except Hispanic children. Multiracial Native American, Multiracial Black, and Hispanic children were over 1.5 times more likely to move during the first 12 months of placement than were White children. All other groups had placement moves at or below the rates for White children. (Figure 8)

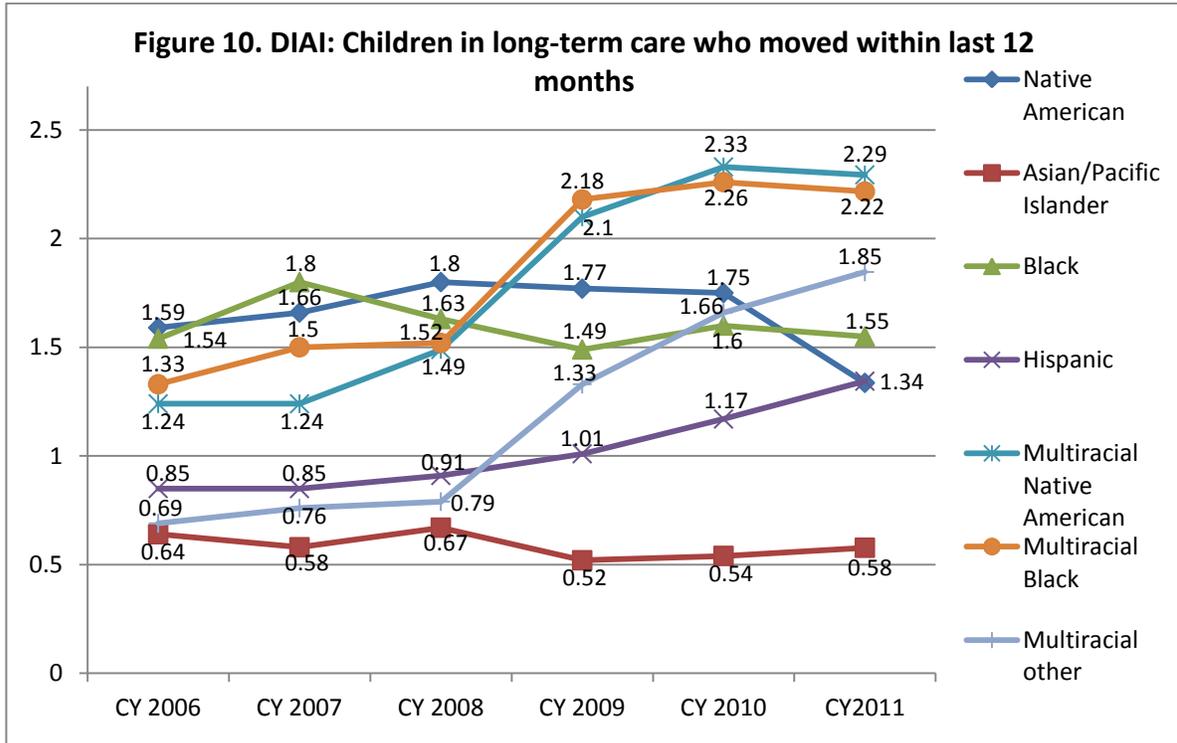


In 2010, Asian, Native American, and Black children were reunified at rates slightly below those of White children. Other Multiracial, Multiracial Black, Multiracial Native American, and Hispanic children were almost twice as likely as White children to be reunified within 12 months of placement. (Figure 9)



*For this indicator only, values above 1 are positive, indicating that children are more likely to be reunified within 12 months

Multiracial Native American(2.29) and Multiracial Black (2.22) children in long term care are 2 times more likely to have moved within the last year, though the rate of disproportionality has decreased slightly over the last year (-.04). Rates have also decreased for Native American (-.41) and Black children (-.05), and have increased for Hispanic (+.17) and other Multiracial (+.19). (Figure 10)



Recommendation A: Compliance with Indian Child Welfare Act

Recommendation from the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee Remediation Plan, dated December 2008:

“DSHS should comply with ICWA. The Indian Child Welfare Case Review Model developed in collaboration with Tribal partners and the Indian Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC) should be the anchor for an enhanced ICW quality improvement/compliance measurement system.”

Status:

Children’s Administration values the government-to-government relationship with the 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington state. CA continues collaboration with tribes and Recognized American Indian Organizations (RAIOs) in administering the Indian Child Welfare Case Review. ICWA Case Reviews were held in 2007 and in 2009. A third statewide ICWA Case Review is complete and the results will be available in early 2013.

DSHS staff updated the ICWA Case Review tool for 2012 in partnership with the Office of Indian Policy and tribal partners through IPAC. This new tool improves the reviewer’s ability to verify compliance with both the state and federal ICWA. Early identification of Indian children, early engagement of tribes and timely legal notice continue to be primary goals.

Work accomplished in CY2012 to increase compliance with ICWA includes:

- CA leadership and the Washington state Attorney General’s office continue to provide annual training to field staff on legal notice to tribes and identification of Indian children.
- CA is partnering with the Indian Policy Advisory Committee to increase the number of Native American foster caregivers statewide. CA and IPAC are also reviewing all licensing materials and training tools to ensure they are culturally appropriate for potential caregivers.
- Representatives of the Hoh Tribe and the Quinault Tribe participated in the four-day Family Team Decision-Making (FTDM) facilitator training held in February 2012. FTDMs have resulted in more children placed in less restrictive placements when this can be done safely. Between 2009 and 2011, the percentage of FTDMs held for Indian children doubled.
- On October 9 and 10, 2012, an Indian Child Welfare Summit was held at the Great Wolf Lodge to provide further training on the legal and social work aspects of the ICWA. Judges, attorneys, tribal staff and regional CA staff attended the summit.

Timeline:

The results of the ICWA Case Reviews will be used to design implementation plans in 2013 for each region in partnership with the local tribes. These implementation plans

will provide guidance to field staff on how to become compliant with the federal and state ICWA and Washington State policies.

Recommendation B: Cultural Competence and Anti-Racism Training

Recommendation from the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee Remediation Plan, dated December 2008:

“On-going anti-racism training should be mandatory for all case-carrying Children Administration and Child Placing Agency workers, all service provider staff, all Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), all Guardian ad Litem (GAL), all individuals who represent children and birth parents in dependency proceedings, and all individuals who serve on public committees, boards, and other groups that are charged with providing guidance, oversight, or advice regarding the operation and management of the Washington state child welfare system. This training should focus on increasing the trainee’s level of cultural competency and understanding of race and racism. The training should include ICW standards, government-to-government relations, local agreements, and the operation of the Indian Policy Advisory Council. The training should also include a self assessment of cultural competency using a tool similar to the Cultural Competency Continuum.”

Status:

Children’s Administration has incorporated its training efforts, as recommended, into the new training plan developed in Recommendation I: Mandatory Disproportionality Awareness Training. For information about cultural competence and anti-racism training, please see page 22 of this report.

Recommendation C: Assessment of Children's Administration

Recommendation from the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee Remediation Plan, dated December 2008:

“CA, its service providers, and child placing agencies should assess their organizational cultural competency and commitment to the elimination of racial disproportionality for children of color. The National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA) Disproportionality Diagnostic Tool should be used to conduct the assessments. This tool is used to evaluate social, systemic, and individual factors that may be contributing to disparate treatment of children of color in the child welfare system.”

Status:

Between August 2009 and January 2011, the Children's Administration distributed the NAPCWA assessment to all CA staff; the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee; and the Children, Youth and Family Services Advisory Committee. CA enlisted the services of our partners at DSHS Research and Data Analysis and the University of Washington Partners for Our Children to help analyze the results of the assessment and make recommendations. POC provided a report to CA in January 2012 and presented the results with CA and RDA staff to the WSRDAC in February 2012.

One of the prominent themes from the report is the disparity between how CA management staff view efforts to reduce racial disproportionality compared with CA field staff. The findings show that management staff had the most knowledge about racial disproportionality efforts in the administration followed by program managers, social work supervisors, social workers, and finally administrative, clerical and other non social work staff, who had the least knowledge.

These findings show that administrative, clerical, other non social work staff and social workers would benefit from more training and review of racial disproportionality as reflected in current CA policy and practice and other efforts of the administration to address this issue. We also need to ensure that information regarding the CA remediation plan and program improvements are disseminated to staff at all levels of the agency with the opportunity to discuss and strategize as appropriate with regional and headquarters staff.

Activities to ensure this information goes to all CA include:

- CA staff attended “train the trainer” training for Prejudice Reduction workshops in order to sustain providing this training statewide to CA staff and partners.
- Regional Administrators have made Prejudice Reduction workshops mandatory for all staff. Workshops are available in all regions to fulfill this mandate.

- The CA Racial Disproportionality Program Manager is attending regional disproportionality meetings to improve coordination of efforts led by staff from headquarters and the field to educate CA staff about racial disproportionality and our activities to help reduce it.
- In June 2012, the CA Racial Disproportionality Program Manager designed and presented training on racial disproportionality in child welfare for new supervisors at CA's Academy (pre-service training for newly hired CA staff).
- CA partnered with members of statewide advisory groups to disseminate information regarding training opportunities for both staff and the public on disproportionality awareness, anti-racism strategies, bias reduction, and cultural competence.

Timeline:

CA racial disproportionality staff will continue to develop and provide training to staff and work with racial disproportionality leads to ensure information about racial disproportionality efforts get dispersed to all staff. Dialogue continues in headquarters and regions about efforts to reduce racial disproportionality.

CA racial disproportionality staff are discussing potential plans to distribute the NAPCWA survey again in CY2013 to CA staff statewide. The intent is to determine if there is improvement in knowledge of regional staff about racial disproportionality and efforts occurring within the administration to reduce racial disproportionality.

Recommendation D: Implement a Racial Equity Impact Analysis Tool

Recommendation from the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee Remediation Plan, dated December 2008:

“DSHS, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), relevant legislative committees and staff, relevant judicial committees and staff should use this tool to review all policies and practices. The policy staff of legislative, judicial, and executive branch agencies, including DSHS, should be trained in the use of a tool that assesses the racial disproportionality impact of legislation, administrative policies, practices and procedures. These agencies should be required to apply the tool. The Applied Research Center has developed an analysis tool that is currently used in the child welfare system in Ramsey County, Minnesota.”

Status:

In 2011, Children’s Administration collaborated with Annie E. Casey Foundation and Community Development Associates (CDA) to develop and facilitate training on the Racial Equity Impact Analysis Tool. The purpose of the training was to increase understanding of racism and disproportionality, and explain and practice how to use the tool when developing CA policy and procedures. The tool can also be used when making decisions affecting children and families.

In August 2012, Children’s Administration used the tool to apply a racial equity lens in developing CA policy and procedures for the implementation of Family Assessment Response (ESSB 6555). Recommendations developed during the discussion will be incorporated into CA’s implementation plan for Family Assessment Response. Disproportionality leads who are trained on the use of the tool have integrated the application of a racial equity lens into regional meetings and everyday practice. In lieu of a day-long training for employees, headquarters staff and the regional disproportionality leads have developed training materials to use at various levels of the administration.

Staff on the design team for this effort are working to determine the need for classroom training on the tool.

Timeline:

CA will continue to integrate the tool into everyday use and will incorporate recommendations developed from the application of the Racial Equity Impact Analysis Tool into the implementation plan for Family Assessment Response by December 31, 2012.

Recommendation E: In-Home Community Based Services

Recommendation from the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee Remediation Plan, dated December 2008:

“Explore Implementation of in-home, community based services that will keep children safe and reduce the need for out-of home placement.”

Status:

Children’s Administration believes implementing in-home community based services is best practice. CA plans to use the implementation of Family Support and Related Services as the vehicle to increase these in-home services for the children and families we serve.

In June 2012, E2SHB 2264 became law and required the Children’s Administration to implement performance-based contracts with Network Administrators for Family Support & Related Services by December 1, 2013. Under this legislation, all in-home, community based services will be selected from a provider network developed by the Network Administrators. To assist in identifying the categories of Family Support and Related Services, CA consulted with department caseworkers, Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee, King County Disproportionality Coalition, Washington Federation of State Employees, tribal representatives, parents formerly involved in the child welfare system, youth currently or previously in foster care, child welfare researchers, Washington State Institute on Public Policy, and several other partners in the child welfare system. Input received from these stakeholders regarding services that keep families safely together and services that support reunification will be incorporated into the implementation plan for Family Support and Related Services as strategies to safely reduce racial disproportionality and disparity.

In March 2012, ESSB 6555 was signed into law and directs the Children’s Administration to implement a differential response approach to accepted reports of child abuse and neglect, as an alternative to traditional child protective services investigations. Accepted reports that do not allege a child is in danger will be directed to the differential response called Family Assessment Response (FAR). The enacted legislation requires that the FAR approach focus on the safety of children, the integrity and preservation of the family and if necessary, plan and arrange for the provision of services to reduce risk and support families. Such services would be procured through Family Support and Related Services. CA developed strategies to address disproportionality in both the implementation of Family Support and Related Services and FAR based on the use of a racial equity tool.

In 2012, Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) developed its application for a waiver that will allow flexibility in using Title IV-E funding for innovative services.

Under a Title IV-E waiver, Washington state can fully align funding with a policy framework that provides incentives for positive outcomes for children. The department's proposal for the demonstration project is Family Assessment Response, which is expected to keep more children safely at home, particularly for children of color.

The demonstration project will include housing vouchers, supportive services, and the use of evidence-based practices. The goals of FAR implementation include reducing referrals, repeat maltreatment, placements in out-of-home care as well as increasing child and family well-being. FAR has great potential for addressing racial disparities in services and for enhanced engagement with families and communities in a collaborative and supportive way.

Timeline:

Children's Administration will continue to incorporate input received from stakeholders and research on national implementation of Family Support and Related Services and Family Assessment Response and will include strategies to address disproportionality in both implementation plans by December 31, 2012.

Recommendation F: Increased Recruitment and Licensing of Foster Caregivers of Color

Supplemental Recommendation from the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee, dated October 2011:

“The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Children’s Administration (CA) should increase the number of Native American caregivers, caregivers of African descent, and mixed race caregivers by 10% by January 2013 through evidence informed, culturally focused recruitment and licensing efforts. To support this endeavor, DSHS CA should ensure that by January 2013 all recruitment and licensing materials, along with training tools are culturally appropriate and mirror the language of the potential caregivers.”

Status:

In April 2012, the CA Racial Disproportionality Program Manager convened a workgroup to develop recommendations for the implementation of this initiative. The workgroup included members of CA field and headquarters staff; Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee; Indian Policy Advisory Committee; Children, Youth and Family Services Advisory Committee; and other community stakeholders. The recommendation from this workgroup that CA regional disproportionality leads initiate targeted recruitment of mixed race caregivers was approved in September 2012. Regional leads incorporated these recruitment efforts into their action plans, and provide monthly reports to the Statewide Disproportionality Program Manager. In September 2012, a Multicultural Festival was held in Skagit County to recruit caregivers of color and promote the provision of culturally appropriate services of those caring for children of color.

The workgroup also recommended that measures to increase recruitment of fit and willing caregivers of color be included in the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Statewide Foster Parent Recruitment Contract. In July 2012, representatives of CA’s internal disproportionality workgroup and WSRDAC served as evaluators on the selection committee for the contractor. Division of Licensed Resources and the Racial Disproportionality Program Manager are developing strategies to monitor the recruitment of foster caregivers of color under the contract with the selected bidder. The selected contractor began work in October 2012.

In September 2012, the Racial Disproportionality Program Manager provided a presentation on racial disproportionality in child welfare for Blacks in Government with the purpose of recruiting African American foster caregivers in Washington State. Also on the panel of participants were current and former African American foster caregivers that answered questions about their experiences caring for children. Staff from the Division of Licensed Resources were present to provide information about the licensing process and provide updates on efforts to recruit caregivers of color.

Timeline:

Children's Administration will include implementation strategies to monitor the recruitment of foster caregivers of color by December 31, 2012.

Recommendation G: Increased Documentation of Racial, Ethnic, and Tribal Affiliation Data in FamLink

Supplemental Recommendation from the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee, dated October 2011:

“DSHS CA should increase documentation of the ethnic and racial background and tribal affiliation of the children and families it serves as well as the caregivers and service providers it uses by 10% by January 2013. This ethnic, racial, and tribal data should be entered, confirmed and/or documented in FamLink and other appropriate information systems and databases throughout the life of a case.

DSHS CA should develop and implement a process to ensure that the tribal affiliation of each child served by CA is identified and documented in FamLink.”

Status:

In April 2012, a workgroup was convened to develop recommendations for the implementation of this initiative. The workgroup included members of CA field and headquarters staff; Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee; Indian Policy Advisory Committee; Children, Youth and Family Services Advisory Committee; and other community stakeholders. The group developed the following approved recommendations:

- Expand ethnic identity form to allow all families to self-identify their race for FamLink entry within 72 hours
- Develop short online training for documentation of racial, ethnic, and tribal affiliation data entry in FamLink, including use of the weekly AFCARS report

In addition to the recommendations developed by the workgroup, Children’s Administration continued to monitor and support efforts in the field to improve verification of Indian status. Headquarters staff disseminated information and resources to improve documentation of racial, ethnic, and tribal affiliation data.

Timeline:

Children’s Administration will develop and test the new ethnic identity form beginning in February 2013. CA will convene a workgroup to develop the online training for leadership approval by March 2013.

Recommendation H: Elimination of Long-Term Foster Care for children of color age 12 and older

Supplemental Recommendation from the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee, dated October 2011:

“DSHS CA should eliminate the use of long-term foster care as a permanency goal for children of color age 12 or older (and for all children). In addition, long-term foster care as a permanency goal should be eliminated. In order to assess progress toward this recommendation, current children of color with this permanency plan should be identified and staffed. This will be the baseline discussed at the February 2012 WSRDAC meeting.”

Status:

Children’s Administration does not recognize long-term foster care as a permanent plan. However, CA allows the use of long-term foster care when no permanent plan such as adoption, reunification, or guardianship is available. Each child’s case must be reviewed and approved by a regional administrator. In support of this recommendation, CA is developing a plan that includes a review of current policy and practice around long-term foster care.

In February 2012, the regional administrators reported baseline information on active long-term foster care cases statewide that identified children by race to the WSRDAC. The regional administrators updated the committee on efforts to identify and staff all open cases, and to increase compliance with CA policy on long-term foster care.

In April 2012, the CA Disproportionality Program Manager convened a workgroup to develop recommendations for the implementation of this initiative. The workgroup included members of CA field and headquarters staff; Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee; Indian Policy Advisory Committee; Children, Youth and Family Services Advisory Committee; and other community stakeholders. The group developed recommendations for committee review and CA leadership approval and will begin implementing approved recommendations by January 2013.

CA continues to partner with Casey Family Programs to convene permanency roundtables, which are focused on achieving legal permanency for children in out-of-home care. The CA internal workgroup will develop targeted recommendations to improve permanency for children of color, particularly for multiracial Black and multiracial Native American children that are experiencing increased disproportionality in permanency.

Timeline:

Children's Administration will continue its work with permanency roundtables in CY2013. The internal disproportionality workgroup will collaborate with other CA staff to develop targeted recommendations to improve permanency for children of color by March 2013.

Recommendation I: Mandatory disproportionality awareness training

Supplemental Recommendation from the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee, dated October 2011:

“To increase awareness of the issues underpinning overrepresentation of children of color in the child welfare system, all CA staff should be required to attend disproportionality awareness training, such as a Prejudice Reduction Workshop (formerly known as Building Bridges), Knowing Who You Are, or other identified training.

In order to assess progress toward this recommendation, staff that have completed training should be identified to establish a baseline.”

Status:

In April 2012, the Racial Disproportionality Program Manager convened a workgroup to develop recommendations for the implementation of this initiative. The group recommended monitoring statewide Building Bridges attendance reports to determine where additional or refresher training is needed, which CA began implementing in September 2012. The workgroup also recommended expanding the number of available trainings, and development of a department training curriculum.

In implementing the workgroup’s recommendations, CA made significant progress in its training initiative. In May 2012, Children’s Administration implemented a new attendance policy to support the mandatory disproportionality awareness training requirement. We advised staff that trainers would record attendance twice daily for each training session. Staff unable to attend the entire session will attend make-up training in order to satisfy the attendance requirement.

In August 2012, Children’s Administration sent two staff to Annapolis, MD to become certified trainers of the National Coalition Building Institute’s Prejudice Reduction Workshop, also known as Building Bridges. Staff held the first Train the Trainer sessions in Region 1 in September 2012. The two certified trainers are available upon request to provide coaching in facilitating conversations about race and for follow-up sessions.

Timeline:

Children’s Administration will implement approved recommendations by January 2013. CA began monitoring statewide Building Bridges attendance with quarterly reports in September 2012.

Conclusion

Washington state has made many improvements and significant progress towards reducing racial disproportionality in the child welfare system. We completed five remediation recommendations and continue work on the others included in this report. In addition, we are adding new initiatives to continue efforts to reduce racial disproportionality.

The Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee recommended four new remediation initiatives to the department in November 2011. In 2012, the department planned and developed strategies to implement these new recommendations and will report on progress in the January 2014 status report. The new initiatives are:

- Increase recruitment and licensing of caregivers of color
- Increase documentation of ethnic and racial background and tribal affiliation
- Eliminate the use of long-term foster care for children of color age 12 or older
- Make disproportionality awareness training mandatory for CA staff

Work continues with the FamLink Information Management System staff to enhance the ability to capture and report accurate data at the region, unit and worker levels. CA staff continue to investigate and refine data reports and analysis. Beginning in late 2012 and into 2013, FamLink should have unit and worker level reports available so CA leadership, supervisors and social workers can track rates of disproportionality at their local level that will guide and inform our work.